

**HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION**  
**FULL COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES**  
**March 29, 2006, 4:30 p.m. Council Chambers**

**PRESENT**

Cindy Felsten  
Ian Kohen  
Greg Lewis  
Jay Myers  
Gil Palmer  
Chrystal Pushor  
John Roberts  
Wes Roy  
Marie Schroeder  
Barbara Stevens

**ABSENT**

Jason Staley

**\*\*\* Meeting Called to Order \*\*\***

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Director Arlette Tinsley, Secretary Lula Young. Deputy Director Lorraine Smith on vacation.

**SECRETARY'S REPORT:**

Vice Chair Myers called roll. **Commissioner Kohen moved to accept the February minutes as submitted, Commissioner Felsten seconded. Motion carried.**

**TREASURER'S REPORT:**

Commissioner Felsten reported the February 22, 2006 ending balance as \$6,009.02. A disbursement for the yearly Martin Luther King Day ad, totaling \$110.00, leaves a balance of \$5,899.02.

**DIRECTOR'S REPORT:**

Director Tinsley announced to Commissioners, that we have a speaker for the annual dinner, Gerardo González, Ph.D. Dr. González is Dean and University Professor with I.U.'s School of Education. He is bringing a colleague with him, who is the director of a local program that offers local school corporations training and support to engage immigrant parents more in their children's educational opportunity. This is in line with one of his goals to do more outreach with the local public school system and support them.

Director Tinsley informed Commissioners of the great success of the essay and art contest. She extended her thanks to Commissioners for their assistance picking up the entries that revealed a participation rate of 398, an increase of 120 entries over last year. The director acknowledged the efforts of contest judges who are all community volunteers that otherwise may not have an opportunity to become involved. Director Tinsley shared that an important purpose of the contest is to expose young students to the issue of human rights. Commissioner Roberts voiced an interest in the possible expansion of the contest to include college students who have limited or no understanding of human rights issues.

Director Tinsley reported recent activities that included speaking to two college classes and the Columbus Young Professionals group. She also informed Commissioners of community activities staff had participated in such as the Richards 'Exchange City' by Lula and a technical assistance meeting, part of an ongoing project with the religious affairs subcommittee of the NAACP, facilitated by Deputy Director Smith.

Director Tinsley advised Commissioners of Chairperson Palmer's continued support and participation during the new commissioner interviews with Martha Myers and his attendance at several meetings for an ongoing settlement discussion. Director Tinsley also advised that she has received the results from yearly survey on bullying from the elementary and middle schools. Commissioners were also informed of the invitation issued from the Northside Titans for commissioners to serve as judges during The Titans' annual Human Rights Fair on May 23<sup>rd</sup> between 11:30 and 2:30. Commissioners Lewis, Roberts, Roy, Kohen and Palmer volunteered to participate.

Director Tinsley continued her report after members of the Immigrant Issues Group, started by Laura Hurt, joined the commission meeting. The group was started because of the many changes affecting the Latino community of recent immigrants. Director Tinsley informed Commissioners that she has been invited to be a part of the group. She will provide technical assistance in alignment with the mission statement of 'empowering community members to advance the mission of human rights'. Director Tinsley provided information on the federal changes to the immigration laws and the issues that are being faced by kids and their parents within the community.

Director Tinsley provided Commissioners a case update, where she informed them of the filing of a new national origin in housing complaint. Commissioner Stevens successfully mediated a different national origin in housing complaint where part of the settlement included extensive training for the property managers.

Director Tinsley directed Commissioners to the newsletter that includes immigration topics and statistics on the link between perceptions of racism in the immigration issue.

Director Tinsley advised that Jason Staley is the chairperson of the Law's Award committee. Upcoming events for the director include teaching the Peer Harassment & Bullying Prevention in the schools at the Center for Teaching & Learning. The director will be speaking to the Mayors' Assistants Conference on the new bullying law and local implementation within the community. City Council Liaison, Martha Myers selected three candidates for new commissioners to be voted upon by city council members. Director Tinsley reminded outgoing commissioners they will be honored at the May 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Dinner.

### **OPEN FORUM/DISCUSSION:**

Director Tinsley asked Commissioners to introduce themselves to the Immigrant Issues Group. Members of the Group that introduced themselves included, Merlyn Bartlett, Rosalind Pegram, Rosemary Seaborne, Anna Handtke, Laura Hurt, Juan Carlos Garcia, Patsy Sharp, Sylvia Babcock and Betsy Siegmann.

Commissioner Roberts voiced a request to initiate a discussion with student services on the cultural differences that students of the Islamic, Indian and Sikh faiths, have and how faculty can be sensitive to their religious restrictions.

Commissioner Felsten reminded all attendees that if anyone has moved within the last two years, the address on their driver's license must match the address that is on the voter registration files.

### **ANNUAL DINNER/ESSAY CONTEST:**

Director Tinsley requested Commissioner input on a location for the Annual Dinner scheduled for May 30<sup>th</sup> at 6:00p.m., and to offer exhibit time to the Northside Titans to display their exhibits prior to the dinner. The exhibit information will be included on the invitation.

Commissioner Kohen inquired about identification for Commissioners to assist guests in identifying greeters. Commissioner Lewis inquired about tasks for the annual dinner and volunteered to transport John McCauley.

### **OTHER BUSINESS – Interfaith Forum Liaison:**

Director Tinsley advised that Commissioner Felsten has voiced an interest in being appointed as the liaison to the interfaith forum and that Commissioner Roy also volunteered to accept this appointment. Commissioner Stevens asked if the appointment should be tabled until the new commissioners are sworn in to allow for their interest. Director Tinsley announced the new commissioner candidates to be approved by City Council are Tony McClendon, Akua Ofori-Boateng and John Stroh.

### **LIAISON UPDATES – GAY/STRAIGHT ALLIANCE:**

Commissioner Kohen updated the Commissioners on the recent Gay/Straight Alliance meeting. Attendance is low. The Alliance wrote a letter to Chief Martin voicing their appreciation for the work on recent hate crimes. The Alliance is exploring their options to make a contribution to the P.A.A.L. or other law enforcement supported program.

The GSA is compiling a list of all Human Rights organizations in Indiana and documenting their stance on the ordinances. The Alliance members also discussed the potential of East High having a gay/straight alliance. Discussion continued around student rights in conjunction with the rules of the school corporation.

**Meeting adjourned.**